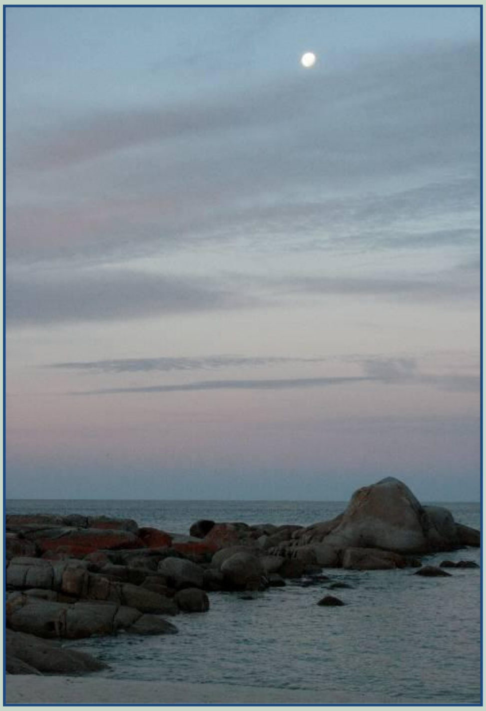
Planning for People

FLINDERS ISLAND

NATURE BASED TOURISM MARKET FEASIBILITY STUDY



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CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Planning for People with assistance from TRC NZ have been contracted to prepare a Nature based Tourism Market Feasibility Report for Flinders Island. The feasibility study is required to examine the market demand, business opportunities and necessary enabling environment to grow nature based tourism products and services on the Island. The study findings will provide the Flinders Council and Flinders Island tourism industry with information and confidence to undertake necessary steps to foster growth.

The objectives of the project are:

- Through a nature based tourism market analysis, identify the most appropriate market segments for Flinders Island;
- As part of a nature based audit of Flinders Island assets, identify the gaps and opportunities to satisfy the identified market segments;
- Identify infrastructure requirements necessary to satisfy the identified market segments; and
- Develop an action plan, including an indicative marketing strategy and potential business investment opportunities, aimed at accessing the identified market segments.

The outcomes of the study will aim to deliver on the Flinders Island brand of "*wild, natural, friendly*" and "*a scattering of islands where mountains meet the sea*".

1.2 Approach to project

The project team undertook an analysis of the past visitors to Flinders Island as well as the nature based tourism markets.

We then visited the Island and explored the various attractions and areas and looked at a range of accommodation.

We conducted a workshop with FITA members and met with a range of stakeholders. This visit was followed up with phone calls to other stakeholders.

It is important to note that this report is focused on nature based tourism, so does not necessarily consider every attraction or asset on the island.

1.3 Links to Flinders Island Tourism Plan

The Flinders Island Tourism Plan, *Flinders Tourism 2020* (Flinders Island Tourism Association, 2010) identified the following Vision and Strategic Goals for the development of tourism on the Island.

Vision

To become Tasmania's leading nature based tourism destination and regarded as a highly desirable place to visit that protects and respects its environment.

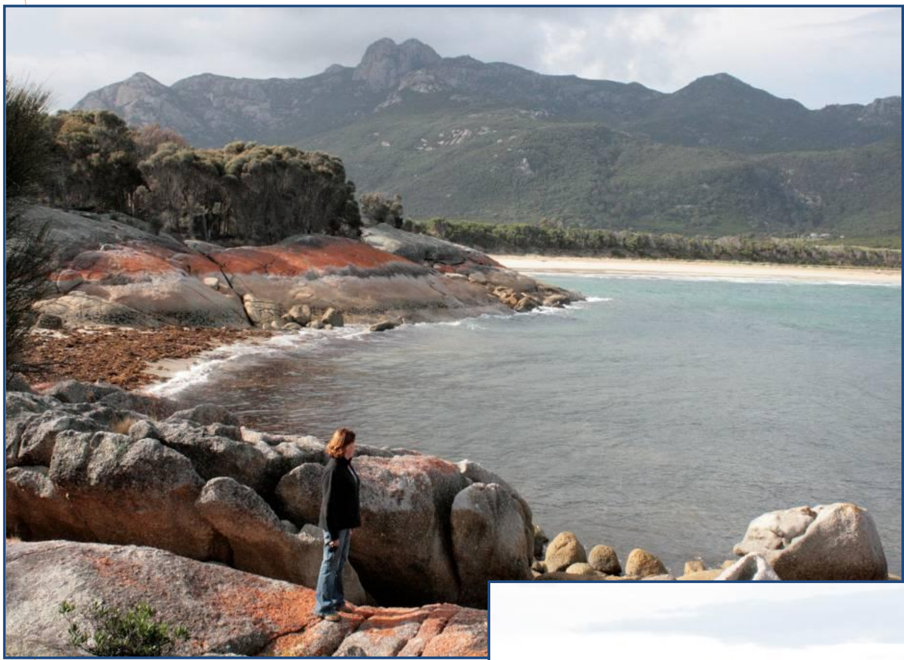
Strategic Goals

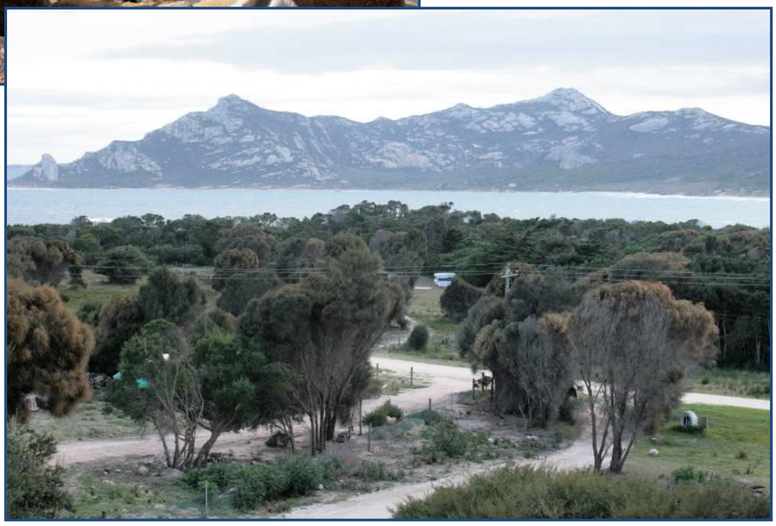
The plan for the next ten years is based around three strategic goals:

- Develop the tourism industry on Flinders into a vibrant and robust component of the economy;
- Make Flinders Island a highly desirable holiday destination that protects and respects its environment;
- Facilitate the development of key infrastructure assets for nature based tourism.

The study team believes that the Flinders Island Tourism Association's Tourism Plan – *Flinders Tourism 2020* – is an excellent base document. This plan is endorsed and supported by the Flinders Council.

This Flinders Island Nature based Tourism Market Feasibility Report will contribute to the achievement of both the Vision and each of the Strategic Goals.





2. SITUATION ANALYSIS

2.1 The island

Flinders Island is part of the Furneaux Group of islands in Bass Strait between Tasmania and the Australian mainland. Situated in the famous 'roaring forties', it has a generally mild maritime climate.

The island has about 900 permanent residents, who are engaged in rural production such as sheep and wool, cattle, lambs, fishing (crayfish, abalone and scale fish), tourism and support industries.

With a land area of 1,333 square kilometres, the island is 75 kilometres long and 40 kilometres wide, with 73 km of sealed roads and 312 km of gravel roads. Three main population centres are located at Whitemark, Lady Barron and Killiecrankie. There are daily commercial air services from Launceston in Tasmania and flights from Melbourne three times a week, as well as charter flights. A weekly freight ferry to Flinders Island operates from Bridport in northern Tasmania and cargo is also shipped to the Island from the port of Bell Bay.

The Strzelecki Peaks National Park (managed by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service) covers 4,216 hectares of rugged mountains rising to an altitude of over 700 metres in the south west of the island.

Part of Tasmania, Flinders Island is administered by the Flinders Council. In its 2008 draft update of its Strategic Plan, the Council is seeking to maintain its unique island lifestyle while developing the island economy and attracting more residents. An increased high quality tourism offer is one of the island development aims, which also include cheaper energy (eg. renewable energy); improved, affordable air and sea access; and improved business and agricultural and fishing opportunities.

2.2 The current nature based tourism offer

Flinders Island is well known as a beautiful natural environment. The current nature based tourism offer includes:

The landscape

The diversity of the natural landscape is a key part of the Island's nature based offering – from the islands, bays and seascape to the peaks, and the rolling farmland – all contribute to the experience for the visitor.

Wildlife

- A broad range and vast numbers of easily visible native animals including Bennetts, Pademelon and Potoroo wallabies, possums, wombats and echidnas.
- Prolific Birdlife that changes with the seasons including migratory Antarctic birds, seabirds-albatross, Pacific Gulls, shearwaters, raptors such as swamp harriers, wedgetails and sea eagles, Cape Barren Geese as well as more common species.
- Extensive flora including different ecosystems and species associated with altitudinal change.

Adventure - Self guided activities

- Walking –on the beaches or a diversity of tracks from 10 minutes to the 4-5 hour return trip to the peak of Mount Strezlecki.
- Diving –snorkelling off the beaches and rock platforms of the island or off shore on the continental shelf or wrecks.
- Fishing – off the shore or from a boat for plentiful and diverse fish.
- Fossicking – for the Killiecrankie diamond.
- Rock climbing.

Adventure - Guided activities

- Diving and snorkelling both off the island shore and by boat including opportunities for diving ship wrecks.
- Fishing – off shore as well as deep sea fishing and boat sightseeing trips around the islands.
- Walking with guides on some of the island's tracks, including the ascent of the island's highest peak, Mount Strezlecki and the Flinders Trail.
- Touring the many sites on the island including interpretation of the islands, flora, fauna and culture, short walks, and visits to beaches, museum, winery and other attractions.
- Hunting – for a variety of species in different times of the year.

Nature study

The magnificence of the island lends itself to a suite of more passive nature based activities that visitors can do including bird watching, photography, beach walking and swimming.

History and culture

The island has a long and interesting history starting with the Aboriginal history that is partially reflected through Wybalenna and the graveyard as well as presented in the Furneaux Museum – a complex of historic and replica buildings containing information and artefacts from all over the region and including whaling history and World War 2 farming settlement development.

Secondary product and experiences

There is a range of other products and experiences that complement the nature based tourism offer including some local produce, a vineyard, places to eat, galleries, and small retail offering.

Accommodation

The Island offers a mix of accommodation for the independent traveller as well as some capacity for groups. The accommodation range includes (i) self catering houses with different capacity located in different settings (coast, farm, town); (ii) hotel and tavern rooms; (iii) one higher end lodge style business with restaurant; (iv) cabins.

2.3 The Current Visitor

A 2009 exit survey of Flinders Island visitors conducted by Tourism Tasmania[1] estimated an annual total of 4,300 visitors visited the island by scheduled commercial air flights. This is slightly less than the 4,500 visitors estimated in the last reliable survey in 1996[2].

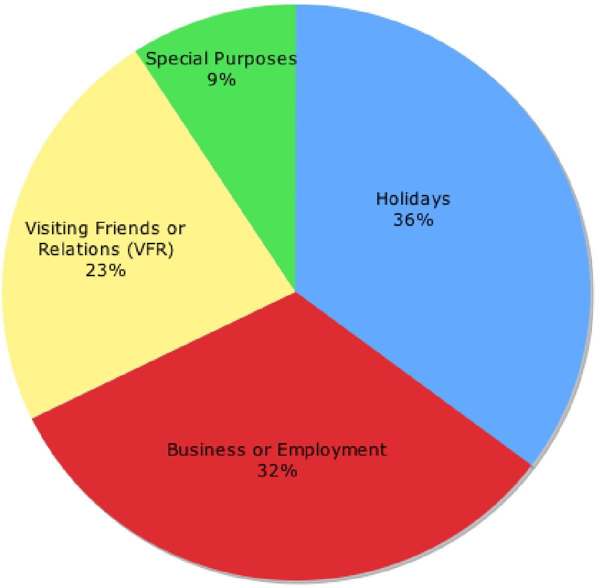
Scheduled airline flights are estimated to account for 85% to 90% of travel activity to and from Flinders Island. The 2009 survey totals exclude arrivals by sea, which for 2009 may exceed 1,200 people (FITA Pers. comm). They also exclude charter flights, which include charters from Victoria.

Visitor expenditure in 2009 was estimated at nearly $5million, with an average spend of $1,128 per visitor.

A small majority of visitors (35%) come to the island for holidays, with 32% visiting for business or employment purposes, 23% visiting friends or relations (VFR), and 9% for special purposes.

Figure 1 below shows the Purpose of Visit to Flinders Island.

Figure 1: Purpose of Visit



Holiday and VFR visitors stay the longest, averaging 5.2 and 8.3 nights respectively. Holiday visitors also contribute most expenditure, comprising 51% of all visitor expenditure.

Significantly, 47% of all visitors come from Tasmania, with 35% from Victoria and 7% from New South Wales. Only 2% of visitors come from overseas.

About 37% of all visitors are first time visitors – especially holiday visitors of whom the majority (57%) were on their first visit in 2009. VFR and business visitors had a high level of repeat visits. While respondents indicated a strong intention of returning to Flinders Island, survey results showed only a relatively small number of holiday visitors returned within one or two years.

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1 Tourism Tasmania (2009) *Flinders Island Visitor Survey Report: Year ending June 2009*.

2 The difference could be due to the reduction in island air services since 1996.

Three quarters of holiday visitors are aged over 50 and the majority are married. About 46% of holiday visitors work full time, with 16% working part time and 31% retired. Among holiday visitors, the income of the main earner was most likely to be between $30,000 and $39,000.

Table 1 indicates the activities undertaken and places visited by those coming to Flinders Island whilst Table 2 indicates the places people visit.

Table 1: Visitor Activities

Activities Undertaken	% of total visitors
Recreational Walks	41%
Fishing	35%
Bushwalking	28%
Swimming/time at the beach	27%
Boating/sailing	14%
Off road tours	13%
Hunting	9%
Gem fossicking	7%
Diving/Snorkelling	6%
Bus tours	4%
Organised Sport	3%
Other activities (not specified)	32%

Source: Tourism Tasmania (2009)

Table 2: Places visited

Places Visited	% of total visitors
Whitemark	93%
Lady Barron	76%
Killiecraknie	57%
Trousers Pt Beach	53%
North East River	37%
Wybalenna	34%
Mt Strezleki	30%
Walkers lookout	26%
Furneaux looookout	25%
The Museum	21%
Other Places	22%

Source: Tourism Tasmania (2009)

2.4 SWOT analysis

The following assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats focuses on the nature based tourism offer and markets.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
▪ Magnificent natural environment and wildlife ▪ Ready access to abundant and extensive native fauna ▪ Good quality road network accessing most of island ▪ Flinders being part of Furneaux Island group with ready access to other islands ▪ Existing tour operators attracting specific markets and groups ▪ Friendly nature of the island community ▪ Excellent opportunities for fishing, diving, bird watching ▪ Good range of walks suited to different experience and fitness levels ▪ Unique local eatable product (muttonbird, wallaby, crayfish, garfish, lamb, beef) ▪ Secondary products suited to market and interpretation (eg museum) ▪ Unique concept of Killiecrankie diamonds ▪ Safety and security of the island for visitors ▪ Unique characters on the island well informed about lifestyle and place	▪ Current flight capacity, schedule and costs ▪ Lack of clarity in the brand – what is the driver for visitors? ▪ Current narrow and lower yield market – VFRs; older groups; people attracted by specific tour operator or accommodation ▪ Access to the island for outdoor equipment (mountain bikes, sea kayaks) ▪ Lack of capacity in higher end accommodation ▪ Oversupply of self catering accommodation not close to attractions/island experiences ▪ Insufficient restaurants/cafes ▪ High costs of servicing tourists in terms of access and freight ▪ Infrastructure (services) capacity in some parts of the island (eg the north) ▪ Booking systems not suited to target markets ▪ Lack of tourism and customer support services (eg EFTPOS, opening hours, internet) ▪ Challenges of operating in a harsh marine environment (eg rusting on cars and other infrastructure) ▪ Costs of operating in a remote location (eg tradesmen, suppliers etc) ▪ Absence of abattoir to process local produce ▪ Lack of resources to adequately maintain/present public infrastructure (eg walking tracks, campsites) ▪ Current signage and interpretation ▪ The amenity and streetscape of towns ▪ Perception of weather

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
▪ Grow and expand market segments ▪ Seasonality and climatic differences ▪ More extensive offer and promotion of local produce through growing locally, eating opportunities, Farmers Market as well as purchase/take home ▪ Extending range of adventure activities offered to visitors – mountain bikes, sea kayaking, rock climbing, horse riding ▪ The Flinders Trail as a route for new walking/cycling experiences or products ▪ Establish 1-2 events ▪ Aboriginal history unique for Tasmania ▪ Unique accommodation experiences suited to target markets ▪ Re-position the brand to reflect new activities within the current brand of "wild, natural, friendly" ▪ Attracting niche visitors prepared to pay for quality experiences and more resilient to higher costs ▪ Additional places to eat ▪ Capitalising on the Mutton Bird experience (short season) - harvest, fly, taste, oil ▪ Additional marine experiences such as glass bottom vessel to look at the most surface fish in Southern hemisphere ▪ Extending the wedding, corporate, self fly and yachting markets and offering add on activities ▪ Offer business visitors experiences suited to their work program ▪ Providing additional wildlife activities (such as evening experiences) and interactive programs (such as 'voluntourism' goose counts) ▪ Other islands as destinations for experiences ▪ Brand linked events – eg. Adventure Week	▪ High numbers of additional visitors impacting on the social and environmental capacity of the Island (including road kill) ▪ High cost of construction, services, freight, maintenance etc on the island leading to need for higher investment levels ▪ Some accommodation providers satisfied with low occupancies ▪ Adopting an 'all things to all people' approach and failing to attract or deliver well to specific markets ▪ Not being seen as an environmentally responsible Island (through high costs of recycling for example) impacting on some responsible travellers' decisions ▪ Conflicting messages to visitors associating extensive native animal road fatalities and hunting with a nature based destination ▪ Operators continuing a 'lifestyle choice' mentality (eg closing down for several months) when growth is required ▪ Maintaining traditional views on what tourists want and failing to deliver to new markets ▪ Aging population in tourism industry without attracting younger locals to become involved in the industry ▪ Competition between accommodation providers driving promotion (rather than the destination and its experiences)

2.5 The Major Challenges

The major challenges to be addressed if Flinders Island is to attract new nature based tourism markets are:

- Repositioning Flinders Island to new markets through effective brand strategy development and brand aligned experience delivery.
- Focusing on providing exceptional opportunities for new and specific markets whilst recognising that delivering well for these markets will continue to attract existing and other new markets.
- Improving access capacity and scheduling for passengers and services to the island.
- Attracting investment to the Island to create the new experiences.
- Effective planning for the infrastructure needs to deliver for new markets.
- Adopting a customer focused approach to marketing (experience driven website); bookings; services on the island and ensuring industry works cooperatively to attract visitors to the island as a destination.
- Attracting young Flinders Island current or past residents into the industry.

3. THE TOURISM CONTEXT

3.1 Australian tourism trends

Development of tourism on Flinders Island is taking place in a context of increasingly competitive global and domestic tourism. This is facilitated by a wide range of well marketed destinations and products, discounted airfares and increasing availability of internet consumer information and booking facilities. As discretionary spending, travel competes with other leisure and consumer products and is affected by changes in economic conditions and social conditions and attitudes.

Australia has experienced a slowing in tourism growth in recent years. As a long haul destination, international visitation is particularly affected by international 'shocks' and the price of oil. Despite the impacts of the global financial crisis on travel, Australia maintained a steady level of international visitation in 2009 of 5.1 million visitors[3]. The forecast for international visitor arrivals by the Tourism Forecasting Committee (TFC) is for growth of over 4% in 2010, 2011 and 2012 due to an economic recovery and increased airline capacity[4]. In the longer term, international visitation is expected to be affected by increasing oil process and to increase at an annual average of 3.5% to reach about 7.8 million visitors in 2018.

Overall, Australian's propensity to travel domestically has been declining since about 2000. Factors affecting this trend include:

- cheaper overseas airfares;
- increases in domestic travel costs, including fuel prices;
- high levels of consumer debt and a preference (especially among young adults and families with children) to spend discretionary income on savings, servicing debt or purchasing consumer items;
- labour market changes and lessening employment security leading to a tendency to postpone holidays or take shorter breaks.

The TFC forecasts that domestic overnight travel will remain relatively steady to 2018, with a continuing decline in the number of domestic overnight trips per person, but with moderate increases in expenditure per trip. 'Active seniors' (aged 55 to 69) have been the strongest growing age sector for domestic tourism since 2000, representing about 27% of visitor nights and 22% of domestic visitor expenditure in 2009. 'Active seniors' are expected to form an important part of domestic travel in the period to 2018, due to stock market recovery and the entry of the large 'baby boomer' population cohort to this age group.

Despite the general slowdown there are still healthy markets for niche destinations, such as Flinders Island and new focussed attractions and activities.

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[3] International Visitors in Australia -December 2009 Quarterly Results of the International Visitor Survey, Tourism Research Australia, Canberra.

[4] Tourism Forecasting Committee (2009) - *Forecast 2009 Issue 2*, Tourism Research Australia, Canberra

This is particularly so for products that can be easily accessed by the domestic markets.

3.2 Social and environmental trends

Other changes affecting travel and travel preferences include:

- increasing use of the internet and digital technology, with expectations for web-based travel information and booking and technology-based interpretation;
- sophisticated travellers with expectations for authentic, interactive experiences that enable them to immerse themselves in the character and culture of a destination – these so-called 'Experience Seekers' are one of the key international and domestic markets being targeted by Tourism Australia;
- climate change and increasing energy costs, leading to the need for sustainable design and operation of tourism facilities;
- high levels of environmental awareness, leading to expectations of sustainable facilities and experiences.

3.3 Tasmanian tourism situation

Tasmania received over 1,000,000 visitors on scheduled air and sea services in 2009. This represents a slight increase in domestic overnight travel, though this is due to strong growth in business and conference travel, while holiday, VFR (visiting friends and relations) and intrastate overnight travel has declined. International travel to Tasmania remained steady in 2009 with increases in length of stay and expenditure – holiday travel declined by 2%, while VFR and education travel increased.

Recent initiatives by Tourism Tasmania are aimed at attracting more and higher yielding domestic and international visitors. The State's nature-based attractions are a core part of its tourism offer. A new brand ('A world apart, not a world away) is particularly aimed at promoting Tasmania's nature-based and iconic experiences and destinations to domestic markets. Key domestic markets are Melbourne, Sydney, regional Victoria and New South Wales, with secondary markets being Adelaide and south east Queensland.

Tourism Tasmania has also established a user content generated Tasmanian Experiences website to increase the range of its online marketing activities.

4. TRAVEL MARKETS AND FLINDERS ISLAND

The purpose of this Section is to:

- Introduce the international nature-based travel market and help to outline the nature-based travel market to Australia.
- Discuss the key Australian markets for Flinders.
- Identify key markets and relate them to Flinders Island.

4.1 Nature-Based Travel Markets

Nature-based travel can be considered to include any travel that includes participation in activities or attractions in natural areas[5].

Nature-based travel (and visitors) is important because:

- It is a significant market internationally, and among Australia's generating international markets.
- It is an attractive visitor market, because (among other things) of the higher than average spend of nature-visitors and the tendency to spread the benefits outside of mass-tourism products, destinations and high-season periods.
- The natural alignment between Australia's destination attributes and the interests of nature-based visitors. Put simply, Australia is among the world's premier nature-based destinations.
- Nature based visitors are more conscious of the need for protecting the environment.

4.2 The International Nature-Based Travel Market and Australia

International nature travel is a strong, relatively stable market that is made up of visitors from many of Australia's major generating markets and, in 2008, accounted for 65% (3.36m) of all visitors to Australia.

This market has grown in recent years. In the five years ending 2008[6] the number of nature-travellers to Australia grew both in real terms (from 2.79m to 3.36m visitors) and as a share of all international visitors (from 64% to 65%).

International nature visitors travelled for the purpose of holiday (58%), to visitor friends and relatives (21%), business (9%) or education (8%)[7].

Although the most recent year has seen a decline in the numbers of visitors engaging in nature-based activities, expenditure by these visitors continues to grow (see Figure 2 below). This seems to confirm the industry-view that individuals who have continued to travel during the economic recession are higher-value on average.

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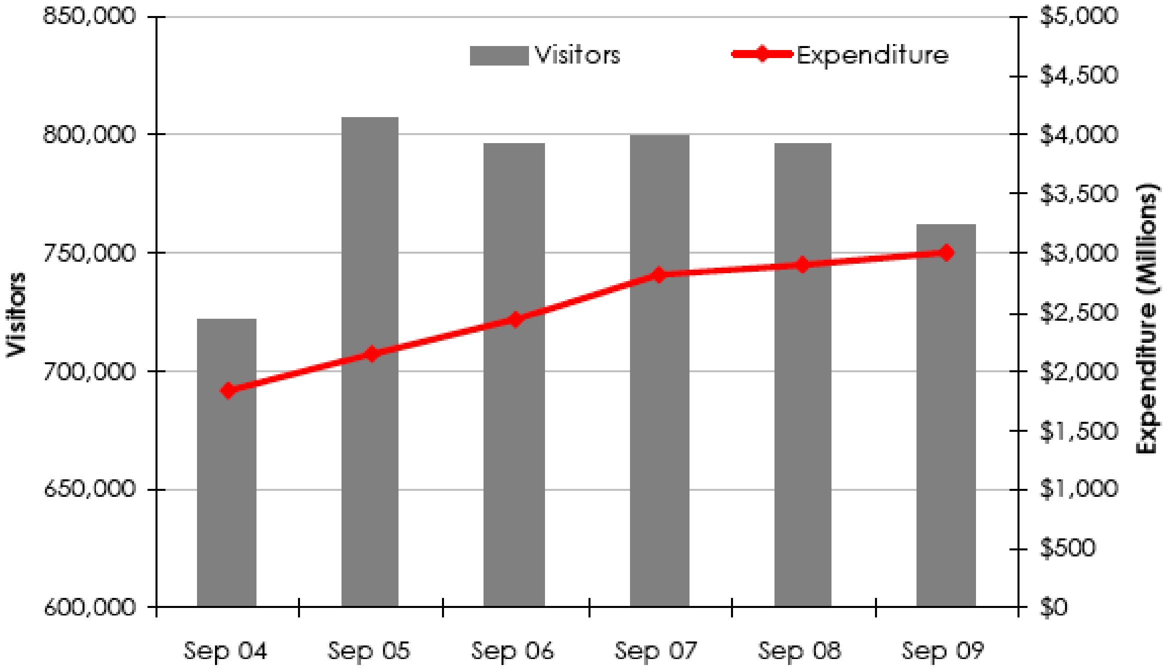
5 See Tourism Research Australia (TRA) 'Focus on Nature-Based Travel' (2008) for list of activities used for analysis. These consist of visiting National Parks, zoos or aquariums; Visiting botanical or other public gardens; Bushwalking or rainforest walks; Whale or dolphin watching (in the ocean); Snorkelling; Scuba-diving

6 The most recent period for which complete data is readily available.

7 Tourism Research Australia (2008 a)

Figure 2: Participation in nature-based activities by international visitors



Source: Tourism & Transport Forum (2009)

Overall, nature-based visitors spend considerably more than other visitors to Australia. This is the result, however, of longer trip-length among these visitors than to nightly-spend which is actually lower than the average international visitor to Australia.

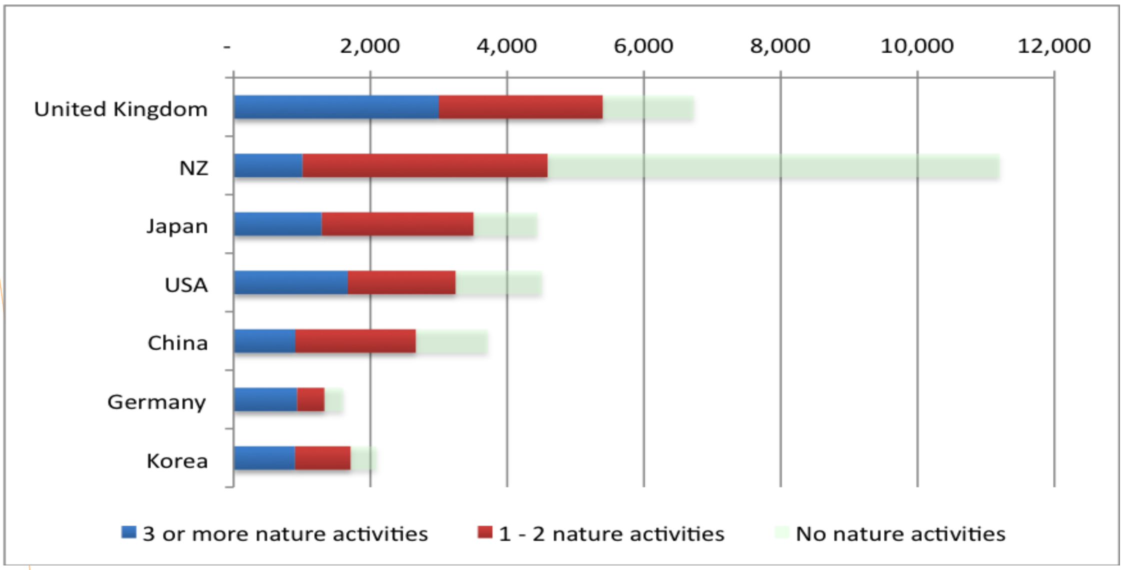
Table 3: International nature-based travellers average stay and spend (2008)

	Nights per trip	Spend per night	Spend per trip
Nature-based travellers	39	$153	$6,009
Other international visitors	20	$190	$3,747

Figure 3 below demonstrates the size of the international nature-based visitor market among Australia's 'top-tier' international markets[8]. It shows that while New Zealand is by far the largest international visitor market to Australia it is the second largest nature-visitor market and many New Zealand visitors only undertake one or two nature-based activities during their visit.

8 The seven 'top-tier' markets collective constitute 57% of the total international market (YE Jan 2009). Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009)

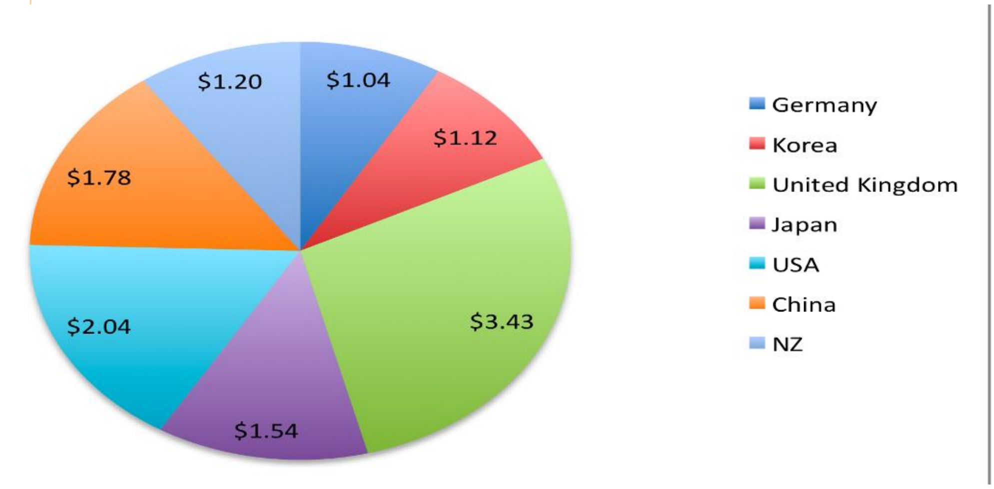
Figure 3: Total nature-based visitors to Australia from 'top-tier' international markets ('000) (2008)



Of Australia's major international markets, the highest spending nature visitors (per trip) were from Germany ($7,811), China ($6,696), Korea ($6,517), UK ($6,357) and the USA ($6,386)[9].

Total economic value[10] of the nature-visitors from the different 'top-tier' visitor markets to Australia are demonstrated in Figure 4 below, which shows that the United Kingdom is the highest value market (AU$3.43b) , while New Zealand is among the lowest (AU$1.20b) despite the number of New Zealanders visiting Australia. This demonstrates an important difference between the nature-based visitors from the different international markets, discussed more in the following section.

Figure 4: Total Value of International Nature-Travel Markets (AU$b)



9 Per-visitor, per-trip (2008). Source: Nature Tourism in Australia 2008.

10 Figures may be slightly inaccurate as they multiply the average per-trip spend of nature-based visitors to Australia from the respective markets during 2008 by the total arrivals of those markets for the year ending January 2009. This is due to availability of datasets and should only influence findings by an acceptable margin of error.

4.3 The New Zealand Case

Australia's nature-based travel market shares important similarities with New Zealand and, therefore, the New Zealand experience provides insights into the Australian situation.

These similarities include the international nature-based visitor 'generating' markets which, in New Zealand, also include the United Kingdom (14% of all nature-visitors), the United States (10%) and their trans-Tasman neighbour Australia (33%). Nature-based visitors to New Zealand exhibit similar characteristics in terms of staying longer and spending more per trip (but less per night) [11] and undertaking similar activities [12].

4.3.1 Tourism New Zealand and the "Interactive Traveller"

New Zealand is recognised for its innovative approach to international tourism marketing. A key strategy employed in New Zealand in recent years has been the development (through extensive market research) and targeting of the 'Interactive Traveller' – a multi-national market segment identified as likely to deliver the best return on investment for Tourism New Zealand's marketing budget (and "New Zealand inc." by extension).

Some lessons from the Interactive Traveller strategy may be applied to Australia and, therefore, Flinders Island, when considering international travel markets. This market segment is strongly interested in nature-based travel and shares some of the traits (and is likely to be largely drawn from) the more active nature-based visitor market described in the previous section. The Interactive Traveller travels to more destinations within New Zealand, spends more during the shoulder seasons and appreciates New Zealand's product offering. This market tends to have high-levels of disposable income and spends more than the average international visitor to New Zealand.

Other important lessons from the Interactive Traveller strategy include:

- The distinction between casual participation in nature-based activities and more authentic, adventurous and original experiences. These experiences are more popular among high-value visitors such as the Interactive Traveller.
- Recognising the link between authentic nature-based travel experiences and a corresponding interest in a wide range of tourism products and services, especially experiences and interaction with social and cultural environment (e.g. participatory activities, guided tours, community connections, making souvenirs, interacting with locals in their own environment).
- In many cases, individuals from across a range of countries have more in common with each other in terms of travel aspiration and behaviour than with their country-folk. Therefore, when

11 Nature-based visitors to New Zealand spend $3,040 per trip vs. $2,680 for all visitors.

12 Activities undertaken are also similar and include going to beaches, scenic trips, bush walks, wildlife and adventure activities.

targeting international travel markets, it is just as effective (depending upon the channel) to focus on these trans-national segments than to focus on specific countries.

4.4 The 'nature-focused' visitor

The broad designation 'nature-based visitor' is useful for a high-level understanding of this market. An important distinction can be drawn, however, between visitors who engage in more or less nature-based activities during their trip – such as between those who only undertake one or two nature-based activities, and those who engage in multiple (3 or more) activities.

More active nature-visitors (undertaking 3 or more nature-based activities) display even more accentuated nature-visitor characteristics than those partaking in only one or two activities per trip - they stay longer in Australia (48 nights vs. 32 nights), spend more per trip ($7,129 vs. $5,111 per trip) and are more likely to be on holiday (68% vs. 50%).

Importantly for more remote nature-based destinations such as Flinders Island, more active nature-based visitors visit (on average) more areas on their trip - 49% made 4 or more stopovers, compared to 15% among visitors undertaking 1-2 nature-based activities.

As shown in Figure 4 above, these visitors are more likely to come from the United Kingdom (19%) and the United States (11%).

A key finding of the above analysis is that the nature-based visitor market is not a uniform one. Considering the number of activities being undertaken by individual visitors is only one way of 'segmenting this market', but reveals a key distinction between the different types of international, nature-based visitors.

4.5 International Flinders Island Markets

Currently, Flinders Island attracts only a small number of international visitors[13]. Attempts to grow this market will necessarily focus on the niche-markets that are more valuable to it and that will maximise return on marketing investment. For example, it is evident that among the nature-based tourism market, the more committed, active nature visitors have the most potential because:

- They are more likely to stay longer and visit multiple destinations within Australia.
- They share some traits with the Interactive Traveller and, therefore, are likely to enjoy authentic, unique and participatory experiences.
- They are a higher value market.

It is important to also consider the overlap between the nature-based market and other visitor attributes, and to consider the ideal visitor by their multi-faceted interests and behaviour.

13 Estimated at 2% of all visitors to the Island for the YE June 2009 (Tourism Tasmania 2009).

4.6 Australian Flinders Island Markets

Most (98%) of holiday visitors to Flinders Island are domestic visitors and nearly half (47%) of these are residents of Tasmania. Residents of Victoria represent 35% of Flinders Island visitors.

Domestic travel has slowed in Australia in recent years, both in real terms and as a recipient of Australians' 'share of wallet'. Australians have opted to spend an increasing proportion of their money on overseas travel and on other consumable items, such as electronic consumer goods[14].

The markets outlined below have been identified by researchers as the most promising markets for improving the fortunes of domestic travel in Australia and are significant markets in their own right at the present time. In particular, these sub-markets include:

- The Tasmanian Market
- The nature-based visitor market.
- The 'Experience Seeker' market.
- The domestic short-break market.
- The 'over 55s' market.

Tasmania is a very important market to Flinders Island, both as a source of visitors who reside in Tasmania and as a stop off point for visitors from the rest of Australia and the rest of the world.

Table 4: Tasmanian Visitor markets

	Visits	Visitor days	Av. Nights per visit	Total expenditure
Intrastate (within Tasmania) overnight visitors	5,500,000	-	-	$290m
Domestic (interstate) visitors	779,500	6,630,000	8.5	$1,260m
International visitors	139,500	2,600,000	18.9	$274m

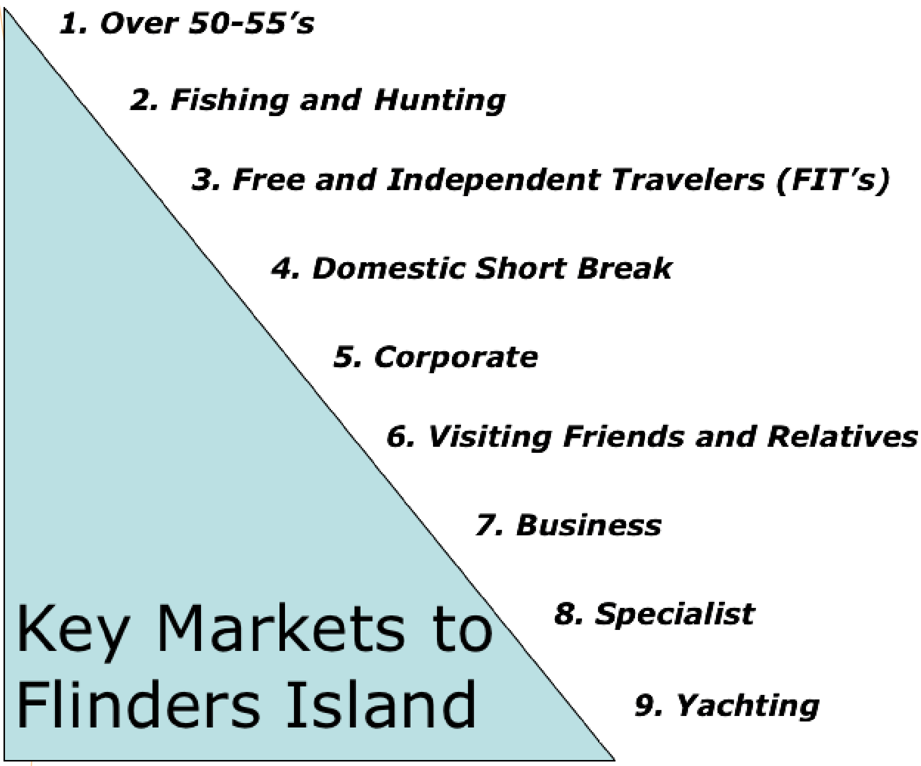
Key challenges for Tasmania include addressing seasonality issues and encouraging visitation to the more remote regions of the State. The latter of these issues is clearly a challenge facing Flinders Island which, in all likelihood, is attracting a small niche market of Tasmanians and visitors to Tasmania.

14 Tourism Research Australia (2008b)

Regardless, there is considerable alignment with Flinders Island's product offering and 'brand Tasmania', as an 'aspirational'[15] and nature-based destination.

Tasmania represents the closest and most substantial market for Flinders Island – a fact that underpins the analysis of the different markets that follow. The analysis also considers the Melbourne/Victorian market, the second most common point of origin for Flinders Island visitors.

4.7 Key Markets to Flinders Island



4.7.1 Over 55s Market

World-wide there is a growing market of travellers aged over 55. They are an attractive market because of their relative affluence[16] in disposable income and time. Spend by over 55s accounts for one in every five dollars spent in domestic travel in Australia[17].

The over 55s market are already a strong existing market for Flinders Island, making up more than half (55%) of existing holiday visitors (YE June 2009).

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[15] Tourism Tasmania (2006)

[16] This financial affluence is often obscured in research describing the over 55s market as they are, on average, asset rich but have a low income. Australians increase the number of trips they take per year as they age, up to the age of 60+. After this age, the number of trips decline, the average length increases.

[17] As of YE Sept 2009

4.7.2 Fishing and Hunting

This is the next most significant market segment. This is predominantly a land or sea based fishing trip experience, guided or FIT, or for bird hunting (quail and pheasant). The market segment is predominantly male 30-60yrs from Tasmania and Melbourne.

4.7.3 Free and Independent Travellers (FIT's)

FIT's make up a significant part of the market. They are predominantly well travelled Australian's who pre book their accommodation, self drive and undertake trekking, sightseeing and local events and activities.

4.7.4 Domestic Short Break

This market is from Hobart, Launceston, and Melbourne seeking a short (often weekend) getaway. It has considerable potential but is dependent on improved price competitive air access.

The short break market incorporates (increasingly) affluent but time-poor individuals taking trips of between 2 – 4 days to a nearby regional or national destination. Recent research has found that 55% of Australians surveyed took a domestic short-break holiday in the past year (Murphy, P. Niininen, O. and Sanders, D.).

The potential to grow the short break market has been identified by Tourism Australia, marked by a recent campaign ("No Leave, No Life") to encourage short-vacations among the one in four Australians who has more than 25 days of annual leave stockpiled[18].

Rest and relaxation, as well as pursuing special interests are the most popular short-break motivations.

The wide range of special interests that appeal to the short break market mean that many destinations and communities can compete for this market, provided they differentiate themselves effectively. Planning timeframes for the short-break market are short and booking takes place largely online[19].

Tourism Tasmania (2006) undertook a useful assessment of the Short Breaks Market with many useful findings for Flinders Island. [20]

4.7.5 Corporate Market

This market comes primarily from Melbourne and Tasmania. It is a small but lucrative market seeking a short stay visit with some activities.

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[18] A total of 123 million days stockpiled.

[19] Murphy, P., Niininen, O and Sanders, D. (2009), Short Break Holidays – A Competitive Destination Strategy.

[20] Tourism Tasmania, 2006

4.7.6 Visiting Friends and Relatives market

This market possibly exceeds 2000 per annum, but is not perceived to be part of the visitor market. They seek attractions (eg events) and activities such as local food and cuisine. This market has considerable potential.

4.7.7 Business

This market currently exists with about 2000 business visits a year. This market is currently seeking accommodation, meals and local produce. It has considerable potential in providing short activities and services for the current market plus repeat visits for holidays.

4.7.8 Specialist

Markets seeking activities such as diving, bird watching, kayaking and rock climbing do occur in small numbers. The self fly market is also part of the specialist market.

4.7.9 Yachting

This is a market that could be encouraged to grow with the appropriate infrastructure. An encouraging market exists from the Australian cruise sector.

5. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT TO GROW VISITOR MARKETS

5.1 Market Potential

There are real opportunities to grow the current markets to Flinders Island, with the delivery of improved air transport (especially from Melbourne over the weekend), and focussed product delivery.

Beyond that, the greatest potential lies in ensuring a range of products that will attract growth in the following (which overlaps with some existing markets):

- The Tasmanian Market (both residents and people visiting the island state);
- The nature-based visitor market; and
- The 'Experience Seeker' market (initially domestic but potentially also including international as part of the Tasmanian market).

The products that have the potential to attract these markets are primarily focussed on nature and activity products such as guided treks, nature tours, marine activities (including sea kayaking), indigenous experiences and improved local cuisine and accommodation.

Delivering the right product mix and support services for the nature-based visitor market will attract new visitors whilst still providing opportunities for growth in existing markets. In particular, with effective marketing, the 'short break' and 'over 50s' nature based and experience seekers are likely to be attracted to the Island as are Tasmanian visitors.

> *I feel that the branding ought to state not "wild, friendly....," but "remote, pure, wild, yet close by," recognizing the huge Melbourne market just an hour away. Whenever I return to the Island, I drink in the sweet air at the airport. It has a velvety purity to which my lungs open fully. The beaches are so broad that I laugh whenever I come to one. The bush is so diverse and mysterious that I feel embraced whenever I enter it. The quiet! The cessation of the rumble of cars and trucks; the beeping of beepers; the cacophony of multiple humans speaking. Enough quiet so you can actually hear the small voice from within your own heart.*
>
> The words of one Flinders Island visitor

5.2 Flinders Island core strengths

Australia has so many destinations that are attractive to both domestic and international visitors that it is critical to be clear and definitive about the point of difference of each destination.

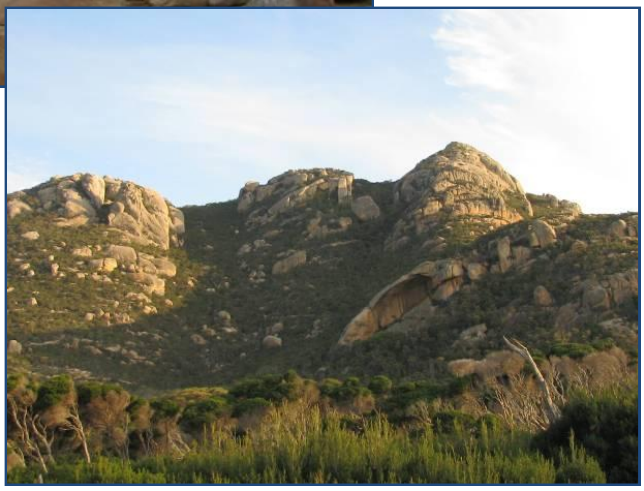
Who are Flinders Island's competitors? Is it other islands? Is it other nature based destinations? Is it other destinations one hour's flight from Melbourne? Is it Tasmania?

In reality it is all of these and more. However, with a goal to increase visitors to Flinders Island, and, more importantly, economic return; as well as a recognition that nature based tourists and experience seekers are likely to be the best fit for what Flinders can offer, the task of defining the best product offer becomes easier.

The Core Strengths

Consistent with the current Flinders Island brand of “wild, natural, friendly” and “a scattering of islands where mountains meet the sea”, the core strengths Flinders Island offers for the identified markets are:

- The natural environment and wild settings of the mountains leading to the sea and from there to other islands;
- The terrestrial and marine wildlife;
- The small friendly community and its history (both indigenous and non-indigenous) linked to the natural environment.



5.3 Product Gaps

Table 5 identifies the needs of the markets and the gaps at the present time on Flinders Island.

Table 5: Product gaps for markets

Market	Needs	Gaps
1. Over 50-55's group	▪ Range of opportunities and accommodation ▪ Transport on island	▪ Higher end accommodation ▪ Secondary product and services ▪ Web based information and booking
2. Fishing and hunting trips	▪ Range of accommodation ▪ Guiding	▪ Secondary products and services
3. Free and Independent Travellers	▪ Range of experiences ▪ Range of accommodation ▪ Transport on island ▪ Web based information and booking	▪ Secondary product and services ▪ Web based information and booking
4. Domestic Short Break	▪ Packaged products (transport, accommodation, food, activities) ▪ Must do activities ▪ Mid to high end accommodation ▪ Food and wine ▪ Web based information and booking	▪ Packaged products ▪ Timing of air transport ▪ Convenient and high end accommodation ▪ Food and wine ▪ Web based information and booking
5. Corporate	▪ Suitable and convenient accommodation ▪ Accessible food and wine ▪ Accessible short experiences	▪ Accommodation ▪ Food and wine ▪ Short experiences
6. Visiting Friends and Relatives	▪ Range of experiences, including those for children ▪ Interpretation signage ▪ Dining ▪ Web based informal	▪ Local events and easy walks

Market	Needs	Gaps
7. Business	▪ Suitable and convenient accommodation ▪ Must do/see activities ▪ Accessible food and wine ▪ Support services ▪ Accessible short experiences	▪ Accommodation ▪ Food and wine ▪ Short experiences
8. Specialist visits	▪ Range of accommodation, including for groups ▪ Equipment ▪ Transport to activity ▪ Group travel capacity	▪ Guiding ▪ Equipment transport/hire ▪ Web based information and booking
9. Yachting	▪ Boat mooring and resupply facilities ▪ Range of experiences	▪ Safe moorings ▪ Secondary product and services

5.4 Key Products

We believe that adding value and attracting new investment needs to focus on the Primary Experiences and products that can deliver on the core strengths. We propose adding value to existing activities to create vibrant experiences; expanding the range of activities to deliver on the core strengths; and attracting investment for select new products that offer significant potential to deliver on the core strengths for new markets.

Adventure sports – sea kayaking, mountain bike riding, rock climbing, diving

There are few destinations that offer such exceptional settings and natural assets for sea kayaking and rock climbing as well as more common activities of snorkelling, diving, mountain bike touring, horse-riding and walking.

The Island is perfectly suited to a range of adventure activities that can be offered at different standards and skill levels both with and without guides. Short break adventure packages could include a choice of all. Special events could be used to promote the activities as well as attract return visitors. It will be important to ensure a high standard of commercial operator for all specialised activities.

Guided wildlife experiences – day and night time land or water based interactive experiences with wildlife (muttonbirds, fishing, dolphins, birds) and potentially including wildlife volunteer activities (counting, tagging etc)

Whilst there is currently a range of good nature based tours as well as fishing tours on offer, the addition of more unique wildlife viewing opportunities both on land and sea will add value to the Flinders appeal. Informative presentation of the marine environment (dolphins, Antarctic birds etc) and sea bottom viewing (corals etc) could be added to existing businesses. Experiences that add value to the current incidental land based nocturnal wildlife observation could also become iconic products that link to the history of the island (muttonbirds, wallaby etc).

The Flinders experience - an iconic adventure experience incorporating overnight stay –the development of a new and exciting overnight adventure experience that assists in supporting the island's brand needs to be explored. Given the existing and emerging high profile walking products in Tasmania with which Flinders Island would have difficulty competing, focusing on another more unique aspect of the Island core strengths is proposed.

The options include:

(i) the Flinders Trail (or other touring route) for mountain bikes with standing camp(s) and/or packaged trailhead shuttle to accommodation

(ii) sea kayaking in one of a number of locations with remote standing camp (on other island) and/or kayaking into existing accommodation

(iii) Some combination of the above

The new adventure experience needs to provide an opportunity for packaging of transport, guiding and accommodation. Accommodation could be on trail (such as standing camps) or off trail with an appropriate level of service. Research is required to determine the optimal experience but it will ideally offer a different opportunity to the current Tasmanian walks. A combination of sea kayaking and mountain bike riding with accommodation may prove the best option.

A nature/adventure lodge based in a setting that capitalises on the Islands core strengths and provides excellent service as well as a range of quality guided experiences will be very attractive for the target markets.

The current range of accommodation on Flinders Island includes varying standards of self contained accommodation (farmhouses, beach houses, cottages, shacks) cabins, a hotel and tavern as well as one small resort with a fine dining restaurant.

Attracting new higher yield markets will require a higher standard of accommodation including good local food and wine, excellent service and a range of activities and experiences. The target markets may also be looking for environmental credentials and sustainable infrastructure and systems. The setting needs to be special – near the water, under the mountains, looking out at the islands- and set aside from the urban environment.

5.5 Secondary experiences and product

To add depth to the Flinders Island visit, secondary product and experiences need to be of a high standard. Improvements to the following secondary experiences and products when combined with the primary experiences, will strengthen Flinders Island's position as a tourism destination.

Food, attractions and activities

Excellent food and wine with a focus on use of the Island's produce (mutton bird, crayfish, garfish, lamb, beef).

Seafood, birdlife and local meats offer a unique offering for visitors to Flinders compared to other destinations. Over time there may be potential for expansion of the local wine industry. The growing of other produce such as "organic" and "certified organic" fruit and vegetables would also add to the nature of the food offering. Being able to eat local produce on the Island or to take something home will be important aspects of the overall Flinders Island experience as well as contributing to the brand and messaging.

Restaurants, cafes and shops with opening hours suited to visitor needs;

Visitors need to have a range of eating places from which to choose, particularly where the majority of accommodation is self catering. They also need to be able to access food and other retail throughout the week. If short break markets are to be encouraged, weekend opening hours will be important as will being able to shop after a full day adventure of other activity. These visitors are also likely to eat out, so a range of eating places with at least one close to each of the accommodation hubs will be necessary.

In the interim, encouraging someone to provide an in home catering, on-line shopping (order before you leave home and it is in the house when you arrive) or similar service would be beneficial.

Trekking

A suite of walking/cycling tracks for different experience and fitness levels.

Regardless of the activity a visitor comes for, as nature based tourists, many will want to walk. Mount Strzelecki will be the goal of many visitors, but providing a range of different tracks to suit different fitness levels and experience is necessary. Ideally, a loop track would be established for the return trip to the summit of Strzelecki. It will be necessary to develop a strategy for the long term development and maintenance of a realistic and sustainable mix of short, medium and long walking tracks. The strategy needs to be realistic in terms of the resources available for development and maintenance of tracks and the likely usage levels.

Indigenous experience at Wybalenna

The fascinating history associated with the landscape and buildings at Wybalenna is unique in terms of Tasmanian Aboriginal history. At the present time, it is difficult for the visitor to appreciate the story the site reflects. A high percentage of nature based tourists are interested in indigenous history and contemporary stories. They are particularly keen to hear the stories from the people themselves. Ideally, a guided experience will be offered at Wybalenna that allows the local Aboriginal community to explain the site, the history and interact with visitors about contemporary issues. Face to face guiding could be complemented by some on site interpretation. A viable 'living' use for the old chapel should also be investigated.

Accommodation

The current mix of accommodation is suited to only a part of the market (as evidenced by some very low occupancy levels). There is a need for high quality at every level of accommodation – camping; cabins; self contained houses/cottages/farm stays; beach houses; hotel; eco-resort and additional higher end resort or eco-accommodation with meals and fine dining available. This diversity needs to be promoted and visitors aware of the options that match their needs.

Packaging of activities and services

The packaging of a suite of adventure and nature experiences would be very attractive to nature based visitors and experience seekers. Whilst some travellers will prefer to select and book individual experiences and do some activities themselves, for a short break market, a combination linked to accommodation will be very marketable. A typical package might include half day guided programs for sea kayaking, rock climbing and /or diving plus a one day independent mountain bike tour and an evening wildlife viewing option.

Packaging of special interest activities by accommodation providers (eg. bird watching, photography) as is currently done, with additional guided nature tours, will continue to be attractive to a range of markets.

Complementary short visit experiences

Existing Island attractions will always be an important part of the Flinders Island visitor experience. Places such as the museum, cemetery, gallery and the wildlife trust offer unique insights into the Island history and culture. They need to continue to be well maintained, managed and promoted as part of the overall trip experience.

Artisan craft and retail opportunities

There are currently limited local Flinders Island arts or crafts being made or sold. The development of an artisan industry offers opportunities for income for locals as well as purchases for visitors. The role of local products is important in the post trip recollection and people showing their friends which in turn contributes to marketing the destination.

Events

Brand related events will be an important strategy to create an appreciation of the experiences Flinders Island has to offer. By attracting people for one off events, they can observe the Island and its core strengths and be motivated to return to experience it further.

The initiation of Events that are directly relates to the new experiences and products will be critical in marketing. Examples include Adventure Week and Bird Week. Existing events and functions that can be leveraged off include the Three Peaks race, the proposed Air Show, corporate functions and weddings.

Extending tourism beyond the summer could also be encouraged in the future on the core strength of the small, friendly local community through winter short breaks in high standard accommodation.

Town and rural amenities

The streetscape, foreshores, parks and roadside of the Island need to be established and maintained as attractive living spaces. Whilst retaining the character of small communities, urban planning needs to provide for high standards of maintenance. Places like the Whitemark foreshore offer opportunities for visitors to walk and enjoy the waterfront. The various sites within the national parks are regular destinations and stopping points for visitors and need to provide a high quality setting. The journey along the Island's roads is an experience in itself and maintaining this to the highest standard will ensure visitor satisfaction.

6. DELIVERING FOR THE NATURE BASED TOURIST

Summary – Flinders Island Products and Markets								
Markets	Friends and Relatives	Business	Over 50yr olds	FIT's	Domestic Short Breaks	Corporate	Yachting	Specialist Trips
Current products								
Nature Tour	✓	✓	✓✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓✓✓
Fishing	✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	-	✓✓✓✓✓
Sea Kayaking	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓✓✓
Hunting	✓✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	✓✓✓✓
Potential products								
Flinders Food Products	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓
Quad Bike Tours (1/2 Day)	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓
Mountain Bike Tours	✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓✓
Rock Climbing	-	-	-	✓✓	✓	-	-	✓✓✓
Nature/ Wilderness Lodge	-	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Special Events	✓✓✓	-	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓✓

6.1 Product development and infrastructure needs

Table 6 summarises the product development and infrastructure needs to deliver the proposed Primary experiences and product

Table 6: Primary experiences and product

Experience and product	Product development	Infrastructure needs
Adventure sports		
Sea kayaking ▪ Guided and self guided trips on shore line, lagoons and to other close islands	▪ Seek: ▪ Adventure kayaking to explore ▪ Develop awareness on the web or in blogs ▪ Seek operator to establish sea kayaking business or add experience to existing business with employment of experienced guides ▪ Identify range of trip itineraries	▪ Business infrastructure ▪ Launching/take out points ▪ campsites
Mountain bike riding ▪ Guided and self guided trips on a range of trails and routes suited to different experiences/fitness	▪ Seek operator to establish mountain bike business or add experience to existing business with employment of experienced guides ▪ Negotiate means of visitors bringing mountain bikes to Island ▪ Negotiate access within national parks and reserves ▪ Identify range of trip itineraries ▪ Encourage event organisers	▪ Trail planning and maintenance ▪ Business infrastructure ▪ campsites
Rock Climbing	▪ Seek rock climbing operator to establish business to promote to rock climbers or add experience to existing business and accommodation providers. ▪ Negotiate access to appropriate climbs	▪ Route planning and maintenance ▪ Business infrastructure

Experience and product Adventure sports	Product development	Infrastructure needs
Diving ▪ Guided and self guided SCUBA and snorkelling	▪ Encourage dive exploration ▪ Encourage existing businesses that offer SCUBA and snorkelling; ▪ may be need for business expansion to cope with growth	
Guided wildlife experiences ▪ Additional day and night-time activities	▪ Expand range of wildlife viewing experiences to provide Flinders Island hosted and interactive experiences of varying duration – dusk champagne and muttonbird viewing; night viewing glasses; spotlighting tours; infra-red counts. ▪ Experiences could be hosted to complement accommodation offerings. ▪ Need to enter partnerships with PWS for training/support for wildlife program.	▪ Operator business infrastructure ▪ Identification and management of Viewing sites
The Flinders experience ▪ An iconic adventure experience ▪ A mountain bike and/or sea kayaking experience with accommodation	▪ Investigate appropriate route, itinerary and feasibility for a mountain bike and/or sea kayak experience including accommodation options (standing camp, existing accommodation, others –maybe staged). ▪ Seek investment/operator to develop.	▪ Flinders Trail planning ▪ Accommodation site options assessment
A nature/adventure focussed accommodation offer	▪ Identify sites suited to an Expression Of Interest for mid-high end accommodation (up to 40 beds) with outward focused natural setting and close to adventure/nature experience options ▪ Seek investment	▪ To be determined through process of site assessment/ infrastructure planning and feasibility study

6.2 Product Development Checklist

Table 6 comments on the achievability and processes required to ensure the secondary experiences and products are developed to a standard that matches nature based tourism expectations.

Table 6: Secondary experiences and products

Needs	Gaps
Excellent food and wine – local produce	▪ This requires community commitment and/or investment ▪ Delivering high quality local produce will require the re-establishment of abattoir or other processing places ▪ Sustainable fish/seafood availability will need to be maintained ▪ The development of organic foods would enhance the product offering
Restaurants, cafes and shops with opening hours suited to visitor needs	▪ New eating places will require community and/or external investment ▪ Some restaurants will be aligned with new accommodation offerings ▪ Range of sophistication levels (from beach cafe to fine dining restaurant) can occur but with high standard of food and service ▪ Opening hours requires tourism industry and community commitment to Tourism and will become more viable as growth occurs
Suite of walking tracks	▪ Given the high costs of developing and maintaining tracks, and the limited resources available, it is essential to be realistic about the extent and mix of tracks promoted ▪ Engagement of community in track maintenance would be valuable
Indigenous experience	▪ The development of indigenous guided experiences may take some time to bring on line, but will be an invaluable addition to the product offering. ▪ It will be essential to have the right Aboriginal people talking about their country and contributing to any interpretation or future use of the site to be considered. ▪ Funding may be available from a number of sources to bring the site to life and to develop the guided product.

Needs	Gaps
A greater diversity in accommodation	▪ The diversity in accommodation will come if investment can be attracted for the experiential accommodation offer identified under primary products. This is likely to result in a change in the market and the demand for additional catered accommodation. ▪ Some foreshadowed upgrading of existing premises will also enhance the offering. ▪ If additional eating places are available close to accommodation hubs, people will be more prepared to use self catered accommodation.
Packaging	▪ The packaging of a range of experiences will require commitment from individual Island accommodation and tour operators. ▪ The opportunity to package adventure products by off island special adventure operators (rock climbing, sea kayaking etc) will be an important step in encouraging adventure business development and promotion of the Island experiences.
Complementary short visit experiences	▪ With a limited pool of staff and volunteers involved in the running of places such as the museum and wildlife sanctuary, effective charging and business planning for these organisations will be necessary to make them sustainable with growth in visitors.
Local artisan and craft products	▪ Incentives may be necessary to encourage development of this aspect of the Flinders Island experience. ▪ The establishment of a craft co-op and local arts activities/workshops may assist.
Events	▪ Given the resource intensive nature of events, identifying a small number of viable events that will deliver the brand and contribute to promotion of the core strengths and new experiences will be important. ▪ Examples include Adventure Week and Wild Bird week ▪ local artisan workshop
Town and rural amenity	▪ Council and Parks and Wildlife have extensive assets that form part of the overall character and visitor experience of Flinders Island. ▪ Planning within these organisations needs to recognise the importance and opportunities of the various settings for the visitor.

7. THE WAY FORWARD

7.1 The Challenges

There are key aspects to address:

- Re positioning Flinders Island through brand
- Product Development
- Improving access
- Attracting Investment
- Infrastructure improvements
- Improving Services
- Employment Strategies

14 Common Pitfalls to Avoid in Destination Branding by Bill Baker, President, Total Destination Management

1. The diversity trap.

Don't try to be all things to all people. How often have we heard "we have it all, from the mountains to the sea"? Attempting to demonstrate that your city or region "has it all" can lead to it standing for nothing meaningful in the mind of customers. When the objective is to clearly stand out, the result may be that by saying that you "have it all", your identity may be "fuzzy" and you remain undifferentiated from competitors. Failing to base the brand on its strongest and most distinctive benefits could dilute the message and present a weak and irrelevant proposition.

1. Repositioning Flinders Island

Flinders Island has traditionally been seen as a nature based destination, but not one well recognised for adventure activities and interactive experiences that enable visitors to immerse themselves in the character and culture of the destination. If new markets are to be attracted, there will need to be an effective brand strategy developed that provides the direction for experience delivery and promotion. Innovative approaches to marketing that are suited to the mindset of the consumers to be targeted will be necessary.

2. Product Development

It is important that the industry adopts a collaborative approach to focus on attracting new, high yield nature based markets by developing specific new experiences, and attracting investment to the Island. Delivering exceptional experiences for new markets will also attract growth and yield from existing markets. Trying to be all things to all people will dilute the experience and the overall tourism offer.

The traditional markets to Flinders Island will continue to be attracted by the tourism offer and with improvements to primary and secondary experiences, are likely to grow.

3. Improving access

Whilst existing markets have traditionally survived with the current airline schedules and capacity, attracting new markets that wish to optimise their engagement in the destination and activities will require changes to access.

Improvements that need to be targeted include:

- Daily flights as well as schedules that allow for weekend and three day breaks and week-long holidays from Melbourne (to complement those from Launceston;
- Capacity to bring outdoor equipment (such as mountain bikes, sea kayaks) on airlines;
- Capacity for bringing all the freight required to service growth in the tourism industry;
- Investigation of fast sea access for foot passengers.

Seventeen Essential Ingredients for Tourism Community Success

by Bill Baker, Total Destination Management

14. Infrastructure That Counts

The range, capacity and quality of lodging, dining, retail, entertainment, public amenities and attractions are critical to the ability of a place to attract and retain visitor interest. Other public infrastructure that may not be commercial in nature, but is important to visitors includes signage, way-finding systems, restrooms, visitor information centres and kiosks, trails, parks, parking and public domain attractiveness. Communities that have the right mix of infrastructure elements are able to satisfy visitors and at the same time provide residents with facilities and experiences that without tourism, they would not be able to enjoy to the same extent in their community.

4. Attracting investment

There is a need to attract new industry investment to deliver the range of primary products and experiences that will drive the appeal for new markets.

Two areas in particular will require new investment – (i) experiential accommodation and (ii) guided adventure products which may also include the 'iconic experience' with overnight stay. Whilst each of these has the potential to create employment opportunities on the Island, the level of financial commitment and expertise to make them a success is more likely to come from new investors, partners or operators.

Significant benefits will be gained if an investor can be attracted that has a similar product with existing clientele elsewhere in Australia as intra-business cross-marketing and promotion through customer loyalty can lead to early market share.

5. Infrastructure Improvements

A broad range of infrastructure issues need to be considered if the tourism experience on Flinders Island is to meet the market expectations. The range can be grouped into three areas.

Specific infrastructure for individual products (services, roads etc associated with accommodation; trails, campsites associated with individual experiences).

General infrastructure and island amenity – the roads, parks, community assets, townscape etc.

Specific tourist infrastructure - picnic areas, amenities, lookouts, car parks, information and signage etc.

Effective planning will need to be undertaken to determine siting, capacity environmental issues and servicing requirements prior to developing the new products under (i).

Community assets under (ii) need to be maintained at a standard that complements the resident and visitor experience.

Specific planning will be required to ensure appropriate levels and maintenance of tourist infrastructure with the most important elements being brand linked orientation and directional information and appropriate interpretation as well as good planning and maintenance of public facilities (toilets, campsites, picnic areas etc) which will experience increasing numbers of visitors.

A sustainable funding model to achieve the latter two needs to be explored including the ways in which local and state government, the community and the tourism industry can collaborate to deliver the best infrastructure for the visitor. Options for a tourism levy and/or the payment of National Park entry fees by all visitors coming to the Island (who will virtually all visit a park at some stage of their visit), or a tourism bed tax, may be options to be explored.

Consistent with the expectations of many nature based tourists, the industry needs to be encouraged to adopt environmentally sustainable practices in infrastructure development. The Island as a whole needs to commit to practices such as recycling and effective waste management, and incentives and awards may encourage sustainable business practices.

6. Improving Services

The visitor is coming to experience Flinders Island. The whole tourism system needs to be geared to attracting them, retaining them and getting them to return or recommend someone else to come.

It is critical that there is strong leadership from FITA to ensure that the core strengths of the Island are promoted through brand strategy and marketing with a customer focused and experience driven website that encourages new markets. Accommodation providers should play a secondary role in driving destination marketing.

Marketing for the Island will need to adopt a fresh approach that is aligned to the new ways in which nature based visitors get their travel information.

Service standards will need to match the brand promise and be improved through industry standards, best practice and training opportunities.

I imagine a host greeting each person that comes to the airports of Launceston or Essendon, or a packet of information that is coherent (not just a packet of fliers all saying "eat here!"), couching the approach within the idea of adventure. Then a host greeting each person upon landing at the airport, or a series of hosts as people go in different directions, but all in agreement about how they are working together to service the client's connection to ....(the place)

An Islander's suggestion....

7. Employment Strategies

It is necessary to ensure that there is a sustainable long term staff pool for the tourism industry on the island. With the local culture, community and history one of the core strengths of the island, local knowledge and connection are important. Finding ways to attract local youth to engage in the industry through employment and training opportunities, school curriculum linked to the industry etc. will be important. Ideally, guides operating on the island will be local people.

7.2 Putting the plan into action

The following five stage process is a simple graphic representation of the more detailed Action Plan provided as Section 7.3.

Identify and remove the barriers

Engage local community and operators in Brand strategy development

Seek support for the proposed new experiences

Investigate planning regime, potential constraints from different agencies

↓

Assess the product

Feasibility assessment – new iconic experiences

Trail and site planning

Site assessment – accommodation options

Undertake market research

↓

Seek investment

Investment prospectus

Targeted approaches

Partnership opportunities and funding bids

↓

Market the experiences

Brand strategy implementation

Engage with specialist interest groups

Marketing plan

↓

Achieve growth

Implementation

Monitoring and evaluation

7.3 Flinders Island Nature based tourism Action Plan

The following action plan identifies those actions deemed necessary in terms of Product Development, Marketing and promotion, and Tourism Management. A three year Implementation Plan is provided in 7.4

Product Development

	Action	Resources	Priority
P1	*Site identification – accommodation* Investigate the options for making land available to be offered for the development of a more diverse range of accommodation (including outside town/settlement areas) through freehold or long term lease Undertake a scoping study to identify specific sites suited to niche accommodation	Internal resources EDO	High
P2	*Trail planning* Engage professional support to develop a Flinders Island Trail Strategy which addresses: ▪ The suitability of the Flinders Trail for mountain bike touring; ▪ An appropriate sustainable range of walking tracks and mountain bike cycling tours to be developed/maintained; ▪ Options for sea kayaking routes; ▪ campsites suited to the trail system.	External funding and resources $50,000	High
P3	*The Flinders Experience* As part of the Trails plan, investigate an appropriate route, accommodation/standing camp/camping options mix and feasibility assessment for an iconic adventure experience.	Included above	High
P4	*Wildlife experience development* Work with operators to add new wildlife viewing experiences of varying duration and timing to programs to complement other experiences and attractions. Develop a program aimed at attracting volunteers to participate in research, monitoring and conservation projects and interpretation for visitors. This may involve partnership approaches with private enterprise and charity (eg. Australia Conservation Volunteers) to attract volunteers from off-island.	Internal resources FITA	Medium

	Action	Resources	Priority
P5	*Market research* Engage relevant experience to undertake market research into the proposed new experiences	External resources (Tourism Tas?) $15,000	Medium
P6	*Pre planning for investment* Develop a constraints and opportunities document which deals with the issues surrounding planning and building development on Flinders Island (pubic and freehold land) including sites identified for new accommodation.	Internal resources EDO	High
P7	*Investment package* Develop an investment package for Flinders Island based on the commercial and development opportunities identified as a result of this plan. Prospectus to address: ▪ The Flinders Island context; ▪ Guiding principles for investment (consistent with brand and target market); ▪ Compliance and planning regime – including checklists, templates and procedures to assist potential commercial operators to either assess requirements or assist in complying (including working with stakeholders to simplify and streamline); ▪ Characteristics of relevant business models; ▪ Examples of specific investment opportunities; ▪ Investment attraction document.	Internal resources EDO	Medium
P8	*Seek investment* Using the Investment prospectus adopt a targeted approach to seeking new operators to invest in the tourism industry on the Island. Priority should go to: ▪ nature/adventure lodge – 20 rooms maximum ▪ Adventure and nature tour businesses; ▪ Investment in the Flinders Experience.	Internal resources EDO	Medium

	Action	Resources	Priority
P9	*Review of tourism signage* Develop and implement a Signage Strategy based on the brand that addresses: ▪ Standards and images for all directional and wayfinding signage; ▪ The implementation of Tourism signage; ▪ The identification of an Island Touring route taking in the main visitor sites and points of interest; ▪ Directional signage within settled areas and linked to visitor maps.	External resources Tourism Tas $10,000 Implementation $20,000	Medium
P10	*Infrastructure upgrades* Undertake site planning for day use and campsites on public land to ensure the highest standards of visitor experience and environmental management	Parks Tas and FC $20,000	Medium
P11	*Visitor Information Centre* Review the capacity of the existing Visitor Centre as growth occurs in tourism and investigate opportunities for: ▪ Alternate premises if necessary; ▪ Additional staff and funding as required; ▪ Targeted strategic/advisory support through State and Australian Government Tourism Bodies.	FC	Low
P12	*Indigenous experiences* Work with the local Aboriginal community to: ▪ develop interactive guided experiences focused on Wybelanna and the unique Aboriginal history of the Island; ▪ investigate appropriate interactive uses for the future use of the Wybalenna chapel; ▪ develop relevant and meaningful interpretation of Island cultural sites.	External resources $15,000	Low
P13	*Shire planning scheme* Consider the streetscape and tourism needs in any urban design framework for settlements on the Island including appropriate foreshore reserves.	FC	Medium

	Action	Resources	Priority
P14	*Boat access* Investigate the need for new boat launching/jetties etc to service new adventure activities.	Undertaken within Trails Strategy	Medium
P15	*Moorings* Develop a Yacht Mooring Plan and undertake business planning for establishment of new moorings for passing yachts.	FC	Medium
P16	*Support for new adventure activities* Encourage local business operators to add to existing operations to provide support services for new adventure activities (shuttle buses, catering, trailhead pick ups etc).	FC and FITA	Medium
P17	*Environmental sustainability* Support initiatives which reduce environmental footprint to underpin the eco tourism philosophy of environmental sustainability including: ▪ Waterwise and energy reduction programs; ▪ Design Principles for new/upgrading of buildings and developments which consider environmental impacts eg. Water tanks, airflows, insulation, solar power; ▪ Initiate local carbon offset program which supports forest rehabilitation; ▪ Support waste reduction and recycling programs.	FC	High
P18	*Customer services* Pursue improved tourism services including: ▪ Opening hours of food and retail; ▪ new and effective approaches to accommodation booking and payment; ▪ Commercial operators developing support services for visitors using the island including catering, car shuttles etc.; ▪ Appropriate transport (ie car hires, buses)to match growth in tourism; ▪ Well trained and informed staff across the tourism, hospitality and support services; ▪ Additional ATMs; ▪ Possibility of hosts at airport.	FITA	Medium

	Action	Resources	Priority
P19	*Welcome Product* Establish a "Welcome product" that reflects the essence of the brand and provides business opportunities for the community. Options include weekly Welcome function including food and tourism operator stalls; weekly markets or similar.	FITA	Medium
P20	*Local produce* Continue to pursue investment for the necessary businesses to ensure availability of local produce (meat, fish etc) including funding to re-establish the Abattoir Seafood processing.	EDO	High
P21	*Local artisan and crafts* Encourage local community to make and sell arts and crafts through initiation of training courses and potentially a craft co-op.	FITA	Low

Marketing and promotion

	Action	Resources	Priority
M1	*Brand strategy development* Engage a creative advertising agency to assist with refocusing of the Brand to re-position Flinders Island for new markets including adventure tourism. Commission the creative work necessary to support the implementation of the brand including suitable creative direction and support for collateral, signage, infrastructure etc	External funding $10,000- Stg 1 $20,000- Stg 2	High
M2	*Marketing and communications plan* Develop a marketing and communications plan that includes: ▪ marketing strategies for developing and attracting target markets; ▪ budgeted rolling 12 month operational plans detailing marketing activities and opportunities for the next five years; ▪ opportunities for marketing partnerships; ▪ a public relations/media plan aligned to marketing initiatives, product development and responses to market fluctuations or incidents;	External resources $20,000	Medium

	Action	Resources	Priority
	▪ a communications plan for FITA to engage with its members and the tourism industry. The plan should provide for: ▪ An effective and comprehensive experience driven website including on line booking systems for experiences and accommodation; ▪ One comprehensive but simple Island Guide; ▪ Public relations and familiarisations (industry and special groups); ▪ Cooperative promotions on Island and linked to Tourism Tasmania; ▪ Increasing the Island's profile in Melbourne and Tasmanian forums with secondary effort to other Eastern seaboard cities; ▪ Extending and renewing distribution channels including relationships and Packaging of product.		
M3	*Strategic targeted marketing to specific market groups* Create an awareness of Flinders Island as an adventure and nature destination through targeted approaches to recreational groups (eg sea kayakers, rock climbers) by exposing them to the opportunities and encouraging them to promote through appropriate channels.	EDO	High
M4	*Website enhancement* Enhance the website as an effective experience driven tool for visitors with links to Tourism Tasmania	FITA	Medium
M5	*Visiting journalists* Host Australian adventure media – eg kayaking, diving, mountain biking, climbing-potentially through links with user groups as markets with considerable potential to grow Host up to 3 travel writers from the main weekend dailies in Sydney, Melbourne and Tasmania	FITA	High
M6	*FITA consumer contact* Create a FITA email database for regular consumer newsletters	FITA	Medium
M7	*Niche market promotion* Conduct a familiarisation tour/s for niche market leaders and industry personnel aimed at	FITA	Medium

	Action	Resources	Priority
	creating strong relationships between Flinders Island Tourism operators and tourism leaders		
M8	*Promotion* Create and distribute a new Flinders Island tourism brochure	FITA	Low

Tourism management and governance

	Action	Resources	Priority
T1	*Monitoring* Initiate a partnership with one of the Universities(Tasmanian or mainland) to: ▪ Implement an effective system for monitoring visitor numbers, attitudes and satisfaction as well as accommodation occupancies; ▪ Undertake benchmark monitoring in the short term against which the success of actions in this plan can be measured through regular program; ▪ Measure the economic impacts of tourism on Flinders Island.	Internal resources EDO	High
T2	*Engagement with industry* Initiate a Flinders Island tourism forum that engages the tourism industry and the community on the Island with off shore operators and specialists to showcase the Island as well as present and drive ▪ The new directions; ▪ case studies of successful like businesses; ▪ new experience development.	Internal resources EDO and FITA	Medium
T3	*Training* Provide training course (s) that focus on up-skilling personnel with: ▪ Front desk ▪ Hospitality ▪ Financial management Investigate training links with the Flinders Island school	FITA	High

	Action	Resources	Priority
T4	*Funding* Work with tourism industry partners to develop integrated funding applications for tourism improvements identified in this report.	EDO, FITA, FC, PWS	High

7.4 Annual Plan 2010 - 2013

2010/11

Key objectives

1. To refresh the Flinders Island brand to recognise experiences that will grow the market and attract new markets
2. To identify the base and new opportunities for attracting new investment in the tourism industry
3. To pursue a cohesive industry and community approach to tourism

Outcomes

1. Early recognition of adventure and nature based experiences as key island offerings
2. Readiness to seek investors for new opportunities
3. Base line data for measuring growth

Actions – Product Development

P1	*Site identification – accommodation* Investigate the options for making land available to be offered for the development of a more diverse range of accommodation (including outside town/settlement areas) through freehold or long term lease Undertake a scoping study to identify specific sites suited to niche accommodation	Internal resources EDO	High
P2	*Trail planning* Engage professional support to develop a Flinders Island Trail Strategy which addresses: ▪ The suitability of the Flinders Trail for mountain bike touring; ▪ An appropriate sustainable range of walking tracks and mountain bike cycling tours to be developed/maintained;	External funding and resources $50,000	High

	▪ Options for sea kayaking routes; ▪ campsites suited to the trail system.		
P3	*The Flinders Experience* As part of the Trails plan, investigate an appropriate route, accommodation/standing camp/camping options mix and feasibility assessment for an iconic adventure experience.	Included above	High
P6	*Pre planning for investment* Develop a constraints and opportunities document which deals with the issues surrounding planning and building development on Flinders Island (pubic and freehold land) including sites identified for new accommodation.	Internal resources EDO	Medium
P7	*Investment package* Develop an investment package for Flinders Island based on the commercial and development opportunities identified as a result of this plan. Prospectus to address: ▪ The Flinders Island context; ▪ Guiding principles for investment (consistent with brand and target market); ▪ Compliance and planning regime – including checklists, templates and procedures to assist potential commercial operators to either assess requirements or assist in complying (including working with stakeholders to simplify and streamline); ▪ Characteristics of relevant business models; ▪ Examples of specific investment opportunities; ▪ Investment attraction document.	Internal resources EDO	Medium
P5	*Market research* Engage relevant experience to undertake market research into the proposed new experiences	External resources (Tourism Tas?)$15,000	Medium
P20	*Local produce* Continue to pursue investment for the necessary businesses to ensure availability of local produce (meat, fish etc) including funding to re-establish the Abattoir Seafood processing.	EDO	High

P14	*Boat access* Investigate the need for new boat launching/jetties etc to service new adventure activities.	Undertaken within Trails Strategy	Medium
P15	*Moorings* Develop a Yacht Mooring Plan and undertake business planning for establishment of new moorings for passing yachts.	FC	Medium
P17	*Environmental sustainability* Support initiatives which reduce environmental footprint to underpin the eco tourism philosophy of environmental sustainability including: ▪ Waterwise and energy reduction programs; ▪ Design Principles for new/upgrading of buildings and developments which consider environmental impacts eg. Water tanks, airflows, insulation, solar power; ▪ Initiate local carbon offset program which supports forest rehabilitation; ▪ Support waste reduction and recycling programs.	FC	High
P18	*Customer services* Pursue improved tourism services including: ▪ Opening hours of food and retail; ▪ new and effective approaches to accommodation booking and payment; ▪ Commercial operators developing support services for visitors using the island including catering, car shuttles etc.; ▪ Appropriate transport (ie car hires, buses)to match growth in tourism; ▪ Well trained and informed staff across the tourism, hospitality and support services; ▪ Additional ATMs; ▪ Possibility of hosts at airport.	FITA	Medium

Actions – Marketing and Promotion

M1	*Brand strategy development* Engage a creative advertising agency to assist with refocusing of the Brand to re-position	External funding	High

	Flinders Island for new markets including adventure tourism. Commission the creative work necessary to support the implementation of the brand including suitable creative direction and support for collateral, signage, infrastructure etc	$10,000 - stage 1 $20,000 - Stage 2	
M3	*Strategic targeted marketing to specific market groups* Create an awareness of Flinders Island as an adventure and nature destination through targeted approaches to recreational groups (eg sea kayakers, rock climbers) by exposing them to the opportunities and encouraging them to promote through appropriate channels.	EDO	High
M5	*Visiting journalists* Host Australian adventure media – eg kayaking, diving, mountain biking, climbing- potentially through links with user groups as markets with considerable potential to grow Host up to 3 travel writers from the main weekend dailies in Sydney, Melbourne and Tasmania	Internal resources EDO and FITA	High
M6	*FITA consumer contact* Create a FITA email database for regular consumer newsletters	FITA	Medium
M7	*Niche market promotion* Conduct a familiarisation tour/s for niche market leaders and industry personnel aimed at creating strong relationships between Flinders Island Tourism operators and tourism leaders	FITA	Medium

Actions – Tourism Management

T1	*Monitoring* Initiate a partnership with one of the Universities(Tasmanian or mainland) to: ▪ Implement an effective system for monitoring visitor numbers, attitudes and satisfaction as well as accommodation occupancies; ▪ Undertake benchmark monitoring in the short term against which the success of actions in this plan can be measured through regular program;	Internal resources EDO	Medium
T2	*Engagement with industry* Initiate a Flinders Island tourism forum that engages the tourism industry and the	Internal resources	Medium

	community on the Island with off shore operators and specialists to showcase the Island as well as present and drive ▪ The new directions; ▪ case studies of successful like businesses; ▪ new experience development.	EDO and FITA	
T3	*Training* Offer training course (s) that focus on upskilling personnel with ▪ Front desk ▪ Hospitality ▪ Financial management Investigate training links with the Flinders Island school	Internal resources EDO and FITA	Medium
T4	*Funding* Work with tourism industry partners to develop integrated funding applications for tourism improvements identified in this report.	EDO, FITA, FC, PWS	High

2011/2012

Key objectives

1. To broaden and improve the accommodation and experience mix
2. To commence strategic marketing of new opportunities

Outcomes

1. Investors attracted to the island
2. Strong industry commitment to new opportunities
3. Growth in markets

Actions- Product Development

P8	*Seek investment* Using the Investment prospectus adopt a targeted approach to seeking new operators to invest in the tourism industry on the Island. Priority should go to: ▪ nature/adventure lodge – 20 rooms maximum ▪ Adventure and nature tour businesses; ▪ Investment in the Flinders Experience.	Internal resources EDO	Medium
P10	*Infrastructure upgrades* Undertake and implement site planning for day use and campsites on public land to ensure the highest standards of visitor experience and environmental management	Parks Tas and FC $20,000 planning plus investment in improvements	Medium
P21	*Local artisan and crafts* Encourage local community to make and sell arts and crafts through initiation of training courses and potentially a craft co-op.	FITA	Low
P16	*Support for new adventure activities*	FC and FITA	Medium

	Encourage local business operators to add to existing operations to provide support services for new adventure activities (shuttle buses, catering, trailhead pick-ups etc*).*		

Actions Marketing and Promotion

M2	*Marketing and Communications plan* Develop a marketing and communications plan that includes: ▪ marketing strategies for developing and attracting target markets; ▪ budgeted rolling 12 month operational plans detailing marketing activities and opportunities for the next five years; ▪ opportunities for marketing partnerships; ▪ a public relations/media plan aligned to marketing initiatives, product development and responses to market fluctuations or incidents; ▪ a communications plan for FITA to engage with its members and the tourism industry. The plan should provide for: ▪ An effective and comprehensive experience driven website including on line booking systems for experiences and accommodation; ▪ One comprehensive but simple Island Guide; ▪ Public relations and familiarisations (industry and special groups); ▪ Cooperative promotions on Island and linked to Tourism Tasmania; ▪ Increasing the Island's profile in Melbourne and Tasmanian forums with secondary effort to other Eastern seaboard cities; ▪ Extending and renewing distribution channels including relationships and Packaging of product.	External resources $20,000	Medium
M4	*Website enhancement* Enhance the website as an effective experience driven tool for visitors with links to Tourism Tasmania	External resources $15,000	Medium
M8	*Promotional material* Create a new Flinders Island tourism brochure	FITA with industry financial input	Low

Actions – Tourism Management

T1	*Monitoring* Continue to implement monitoring program in partnership with one of the Universities(Tasmanian or mainland) to: ▪ Implement an effective system for monitoring visitor numbers, attitudes and satisfaction as well as accommodation occupancies; ▪ Undertake benchmark monitoring in the short term against which the success of actions in this plan can be measured through regular program	Internal resources EDO	High
T2	*Engagement with industry* Conduct an annual Flinders Island tourism forum that engages the tourism industry and the community on the Island with off shore operators and specialists to showcase the Island, understand industry trends as well as present and drive new directions.	Internal resources EDO and FITA	Medium
T3	Provide training course (s) that focus on upskilling personnel with: ▪ Front desk ▪ Hospitality ▪ Financial management Investigate training links with the Flinders Island school	Internal resources EDO and FITA	Medium
T4	Work with tourism industry partners to develop integrated funding applications for tourism improvements identified in this report.	EDO, FITA, FC, PWS	High

2012/2013

Key objectives

1. To strengthen secondary product offering
2. To ensure effective information for visitors

Outcomes

1. Strong industry commitment to new opportunities
2. Growth in markets

Actions - Product Development

P4	*Wildlife experience development* Work with operators to add new wildlife viewing experiences of varying duration and timing to programs to complement other experiences and attractions. Develop a program aimed at attracting volunteers to participate in research, monitoring and conservation projects and interpretation for visitors. This may involve partnership approaches with private enterprise and charity (eg. Australia Conservation Volunteers) to attract volunteers from off-island.	Internal resources FITA	Medium
P9	*Review of tourism signage* Develop and implement a Signage Strategy based on the brand that addresses: ▪ Standards and images for all directional and wayfinding signage; ▪ The implementation of Tourism signage; ▪ The identification of an Island Touring route taking in the main visitor sites and points of interest; ▪ Directional signage within settled areas and linked to visitor maps.	External resources Tourism Tas $10,000 Implementation $20,000	Medium
P11	*Visitor Information Centre* Review the capacity of the existing Visitor Centre as growth occurs in tourism and investigate opportunities for: ▪ Alternate premises if necessary; ▪ Additional staff and funding as required; ▪ Targeted strategic/advisory support through State and Australian Government Tourism Bodies.	FC	Low
P12	*Indigenous experiences* Continue to work with the local Aboriginal community to develop relevant and meaningful experiences and interpretation of Island cultural sites.	External resources $15,000	Low
P19	*Island welcome* Establish a "Welcome product" that reflects the essence of the brand and provides business opportunities for the community. Options include weekly Welcome function	FITA	Medium

	including food and tourism operator stalls; weekly markets or similar.		

Actions – Marketing and promotion

M2	*Marketing and Communications Plan* Continue to implement the Marketing and Communications Plan	FITA	Medium

Actions – Tourism Management

T1	*Monitoring* Continue to implement monitoring program in partnership with one of the Universities(Tasmanian or mainland); Initiate a partnership with one of the Universities(Tasmanian or mainland) to measure the economic impacts of tourism on Flinders Island.	Internal resources EDO	
T2	*Engagement with industry* Conduct an annual Flinders Island tourism forum that engages the tourism industry and the community on the Island with off shore operators and specialists to showcase the Island, understand industry trends as well as present and drive new directions.	Internal resources EDO and FITA	Medium
T3	*Industry training* Provide training course (s) that focus on upskilling personnel with - Front desk - Hospitality - Financial management Investigate training links with the Flinders Island school	Internal resources EDO and FITA	Medium
T4	*Funding* Work with tourism industry partners to develop integrated funding applications for tourism improvements identified in this report.	EDO, FITA, FC, PWS	High

8. THE FUTURE OF TOURISM ON FLINDERS ISLAND

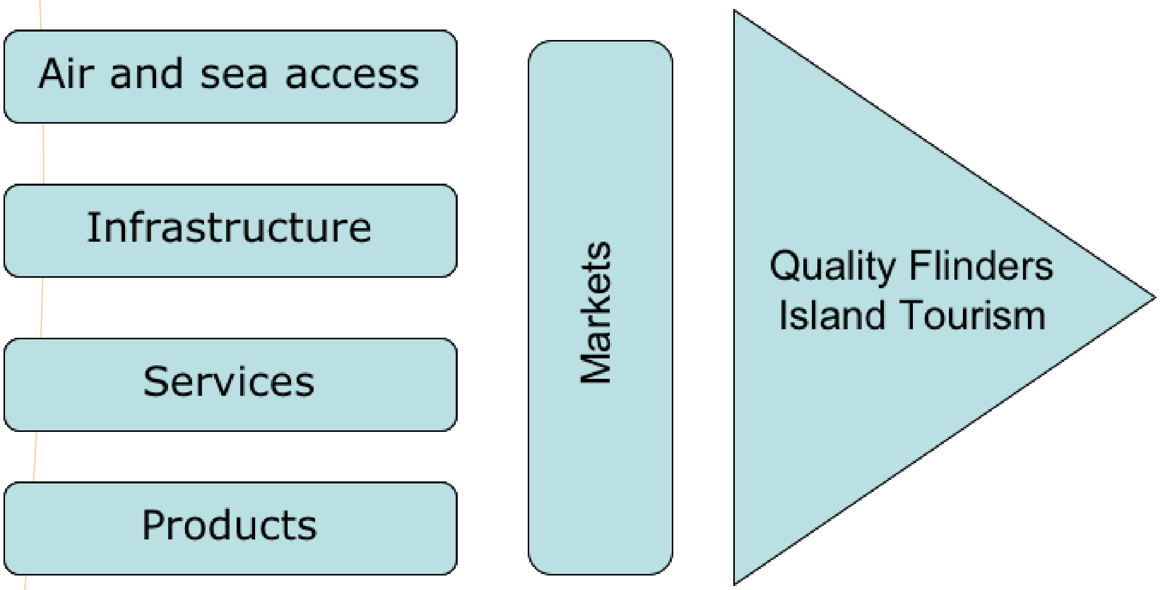
With improved air and boat services to Flinders Island along with:

- Improved products and attractions;
- Improved services and infrastructure;
- Increased investment and human resources in the sector;
- Focussed marketing;
- Solid tourism management of the island;
- the tourism markets will respond positively and sustainably;

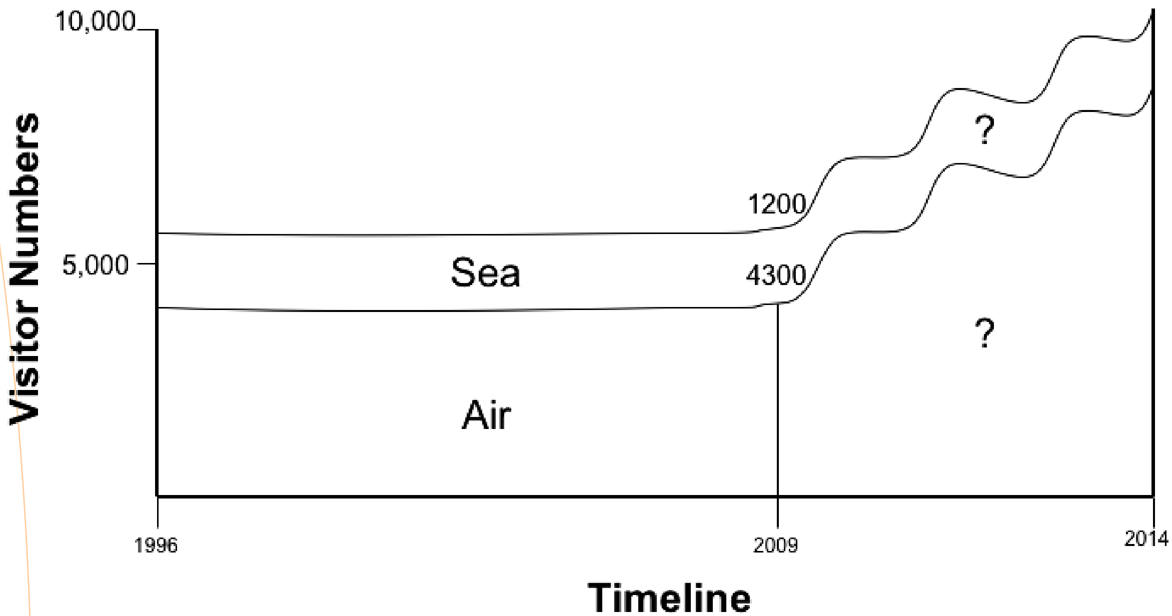
the challenge is for the Flinders Island communities including the council to manage the changes to maximise the positive impacts and to minimise any negative impacts (increased sewage and rubbish etc).

Estimating the potential growth in numbers is so dependent on transportation that it is hard to put specifics down. It is highly likely that as growth occurs this will be restricted by lack of capacity in air transport and accommodation at key times. These will likely be at holidays such as Christmas, Easter and school holidays.

The Future of Flinders Island Tourism



The Future Market Growth



Based on the current visitor arrivals of approximately 5500 per annum it is highly possible to have 10%-15% growth rates a year for the next 3-5 years. This growth will not be steady. There will be peaks and troughs with the majority of growth occurring in the key summer months of December through to April.

Management of the accommodation services at peak times will be challenging. Dual pricing models for the peak periods may be a useful way of ensuring financial viability in the sector.

Using events in the off season can also help.

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APPENDIX 1. CASE STUDIES

KAPITI ISLAND

Kapiti Island is an off-shore nature-reserve located near Wellington City in New Zealand. While relatively accessible – the Island is only a short boat ride from the mainland - its highly protected status means that access is managed carefully and unpredictable weather prevents visitors from travelling to the Island for a many days of the year.

More information, including a history of the Island can be found at www.doc.govt.nz (key word Kapiti).

Historically, there were fewer than 50 visitors a year, but demand now exceeds the number of seats on boats travelling to the Island. The destination has a visitor base that heavily local (50%) but a growing proportion of New Zealand domestic (equivalent to 'inter-state') visitors and international visitors who mirror the main demographics of the nature-based tourist and those visiting Flinders.

The following lessons can be drawn from this case:

- Although well placed to appeal to the growing nature-based tourism markets, Kapiti Island has also changed the 'product' mix to meet the diverse interests of these visitors. Despite the significance Opportunities to learn about and participate in conservation initiatives and the Maori culture and history associated with the Island complement the nature-watching experiences that have always been available.
- Acceptance of seasonality – 84% of visits take place between November and April. Weather and access issues mean that this is unlikely to change on the Island and has been accepted as an operating issue.
- Please the local markets and international visitors will follow. Initially a local attraction, 32% of Kapiti Island's visitors now come from overseas and broadly reflect the strong nature-based generating markets identified in this Report.

STEWART ISLAND

Stewart Island is an island and small community (approximately 400 population) located at the bottom of New Zealand's South Island. It traditionally relied upon its fishing industry but in recent decades has developed an increasingly popular niche nature-based tourism market. The Island now receives 50,000 visitors annually.

Some of the lessons that have been learned by Stewart Island include:

- The importance of managing the natural environment. The Stewart Island community have embraced conservation (85% of the Island is protected) which has been critical to its appeal as a tourism destination.

- They have implemented a levy on visitors to the Island to fund tourism infrastructure and, in some cases, marketing initiatives. The $5 per-visitor Stewart Island levy has broad support among the Island community and will be collected by the transport operators from visitors who fly or ferry. As with Flinders, transport options to the Island are limited.
- A collaborative, coordinated approach is important for product development, marketing and distribution. Stewart Island has a professional but simple online presence[21]. Importantly, this is a means of accessing all of the key tourism services and information on and about the Island, with booking and enquiry facilities incorporated.

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21 http://www.stewartisland.co.nz/